

**REMARKS**

The drawings have been objected to in the Office Action. Specifically, the Examiner states that the limitation of the “insulating handle is mounted such that it can slide in a guide element” (claim 2) must be shown in the drawings. Applicants respectfully disagree. There is no requirement that each and every limitation in the claim must be shown in the drawings. Rather, only essential features must be illustrated. The manner in which the insulating handle is mounted is not essential, and therefore not required in the drawings.

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. The claims have been amended accordingly.

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Watabe in view of Bettge. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The invention relates to operating a grounding switch having a moveable contact piece that is sealed by a sealing element. The sealing element is used as an electrical conductor for making contact with the movable contact piece, thus eliminating the need for connecting the moveable contact piece to a stationary grounding point.

Watabe discloses a plasma processing system having a reaction vessel. The plasma processing system is not a grounding switch. Rather, the plasma processing system is used for producing an electric field between a high frequency electrode 13 and a ground electrode 14 (col. 6, lns. 5-9). Between the two electrodes 13, 14 plasma is produced, and a substrate 12 is positioned. Electrode 14 is movable to change the distance between the electrodes 13, 14, and the substrate 12 is located in the gap between the electrodes (Fig. 2).

In plasma processing systems, a high frequency electric field is produced in the aforementioned gap. Fig. 4 of Watabe, for example, shows a lower limit position and an upper limit position of electrode 13 (col. 7, lns. 10-19). Significantly, electrode 13 does not touch electrode 14 since an electric field is needed.

Electrodes of an electric switch, such as that described in Bettge, on the other hand, contact each other directly. Bettge discloses a load-break switch having a vacuum interrupter. A load-break switch is used to disconnect electrical power lines, but is not a grounding switch. In Bettge, the load-break switch has contact studs 4, 5 (col. 2, lns. 61-65), which are connected in closed states at their end faces 41, 51 and in an open state the faces are separated.

There is no reason why one having ordinary skill in the art would have combined the Watabe and Bettge references. For example, why would a skilled artisan use the switch of Bettge to modify the Watabe reference? Electrodes of an electric switch contact each other directly, as in Bettge. A switch changes the state of the electrodes from a contacting position to a separated position, and vice versa. In the plasma processing system, however, there is no switch. The electrodes are always separated (as described above).

Moreover, the Examiner does not appear to provide sufficient motivation in support of his/her reasons for combining the references. Rather, the Examiner appears to be making conclusory statements of obviousness, without any evidentiary support on the record. The Examiner simply states that it would have been obvious to the skilled artisan "to use the journal bearing in Watabe et al., as suggested by Bettge et al., in order to support the movable contact [column 2, line 59]." The Examiner is requested to cite a reference in support of his/her reasons to combine, or withdraw the rejection.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection

with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no.449122084500. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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